Design Sense
A MARKETING PUBLICATION 43 OF LIPPINCOTT & MARGULIES

CLOSING THE IMAGE GAP

TWO CASE HISTORIES

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CITGO

In one of the most sweeping set of changes ever essayed in the petroleum industry, the Cities Service Oil Company, marketing arm of the giant Cities Service Company, with 13,000-plus service stations in 37 states has moved dramatically to improve its competitive position.

THE SITUATION, in the summer of 1963, was this: Although the company was in excellent economic shape, it recognized that bold new approaches were needed to maintain and increase its share of the increasingly competitive market.

An analysis of the marketing problem was made by Lippincott & Margulies, leading design and marketing consultants, who recommended the establishment of a *communications strategy* to define a new and unique "personality" for Cities Service Oil Company.

In setting up the proper guidelines, it was necessary to consider (1) certain changes in company organization then being conducted by its top management and (2) what the most desirable consumer image was relative to competing communications methods in the oil industry. So this strategy had to reflect all the outstanding equities possessed by the company, as well as providing a set of concepts and objectives to guide decisions in all those areas which ultimately influence the way the company is seen by its consumers, stockholders, employees, etc.

The first step was to pinpoint the trouble. And as research teams fanned out to appraise the attitudes of company executives, dealers and consumers, it became apparent that a huge gap existed between the "reality" of the company's business operations and its public image.

Company personnel, for example, saw themselves in an organization "on the move"—one that was revitalizing its structure, raising its dealer level and up-grading its service stations.

And such, in fact, was the case. But while consumers could tick off a number of virtues they found in the company—that it was honest, sold quality products and offered good service—there was less public recognition of the fact that Cities Service Oil Company is a dynamic and progressive force in the petroleum industry. Thus, for too many consumers, the company also appeared to be impersonal and uninterested in getting their business, more concerned with production and investment than the consumer, passive rather than bold and aggressive, a conservative outfit that had made little effort to keep up with the times.

Among motorists who did not use Cities Service gas and oil, there was still another problem. Few of them had more than the foggiest idea of what the company was. As one midwesterner said, "Aren't they in utilities or something?"

Clearly, fact and fancy were far apart. There was nearly a complete breakdown in the communications link between what the company actually was and where it was going on the one hand and what people thought about it on the other. How had it happened?

Part of the answer lay in the Cities Service name itself. Research showed that as a petroleum marketing term it created some false impressions. Technically unwieldy, it made many potential customers think of it as being in the utility or public service area rather than meeting an individual's needs; for others, the name seemed to imply urban favoritism.

A second reason was the company symbol: a Greek delta within an expanding circle. Within the company, the three sides of the delta meant Industry, Integrity, and Imagination. The three elipses of the expanding circle represented Engineering, Finance, and Sales, while the circle itself was supposed to suggest the company's growing stature.

BEFORE

AFTER

33 9/10
10 TAX
TOTAL SALE
GALLONS
Premium
CITGO
CITGO
CITGO
Lifetime Credit Card
CITGO
CUST. NO.
SOLD TO
SOLD BY
DATE
EXCHANGE COMPANY
AUTO TAG NO. & STATE
DRIVER LIC. # NO. & STATE

Outside the company, however, this stood for little. Hardly anyone saw the significance of the delta; as for the expanding circle outlined in green, many people thought it was some sort of shamrock.

The dominant green color of the symbol was also a further handicap in projecting a strong corporate image. Greens in the blue-and-green family are basically recessive, tend to fade out in a highway context and fail to match the liveliness and impact of reds and oranges.

Meanwhile, an exhaustive survey of some 315 service stations, documented by over 2,500 photographs, pointed up the lack of standardization in the company symbol (one station managed six variations of it), station architecture, pump design, dealer uniforms, station housekeeping, etc.

This simply added to the fragmentation and inconsistency of the Cities Service Oil Company message to the motorist. And while the company has been steadily involved in change and is a technical leader in the industry, public perception of this was slowed by a marketing name, symbol and colors developed in an earlier era.

The next step was to come up with a positive program. But before such obvious moves as a new name, symbol and color, a new communications strategy had to be developed.

Cities Service Oil Company had to be shown as the best of the majors, a company that provided matchless products and services for motorists. All of its competitors, however, boasted similar products and services. The challenge was how the company could project a *unique personality*. How, for instance, could it communicate the key factor in selling gas today — power — without simply aping the competition. It was patently impossible, after all, to claim to have two tigers in the tank!

Nonetheless there was a solution. Most major oil companies were found to share two notable negatives: the image of a vast impersonal organization and one that seems static and self-satisfied. Cities Service Oil Company could break the pattern by showing that (1) it was a major that was big and powerful, but not impersonal and (2) that it was active and progressive.

To achieve this, the company's former advertising approach (which was keyed heavily to such abstractions as far as the consumer was concerned as geology and production) would be dropped. In its stead would come a communications format designed to foster the new corporate personality as well as counteracting misconceptions previously held by the public.

First, all advertising and promotion would show action. Static concepts and situations would be avoided at all costs.

Second, people must be involved. In place of the old monolithic and coldly mechanical image, the emphasis had to be on authentic people doing exciting things in a believable manner.

Third, the company's projection must underscore specifics in order to combat the vagueness that had plagued it in the past. Thus, obvious advertising stereotypes would bow wherever possible to particular persons, places and situations.

Fourth, the company would always be shown as progressive and modern — constantly planning, searching, experimenting and changing for the benefit of the motorist.

Once this new communications strategy for Cities Service Oil Company had been finalized, a dramatic moment was at hand. To drive home its new personality, the company's marketing name would now be changed, its traditional symbol redesigned and its service stations given a completely new look. Properly integrated, this would communicate a clear and consistent corporate picture to the consumer.

Just dreaming up any name wouldn't do. To begin with, it had to be short enough for fast recognition on the highway. It had to be easy to pronounce and remember. It had to suggest dynamic qualities. It could not be geographically or socially limited. It had to be applicable to the oil industry, flexible for possible expansion and compatible with its image objectives of progress, interest in people, stature and dynamic action. What's more, it could not be a totally new name — that is, one without some reference to its predecessor.

There were innumerable directions to take: among them initials, contractions, existing product names of the company, proper names and fabricated names. It was decided that a contraction of the company's old name, between four and seven letters long, would provide the best bridge. To make sure no possibility was overlooked, various combinations were even programmed into a computer. As a result, there were more than 70,000 candidates.

Weeks went into sifting and considering them. There were two finalists: CITCO and CITGO. Both had the same believable bridge, but in the end it was felt that CITGO contained a unique quality and sense of action that could not be topped.

In similarly painstaking fashion, hundreds of new symbols were considered.

Equally important was the color scheme. A special effort was made to retain green, so long a part of the company's history, but it was too recessive. And despite the fact that red, white and blue are competitively commonplace, test after test showed that no other combination worked as well. The trick was how it was put together.

After the CITGO logotype had been picked, it was included in five final symbol designs, each

with its own variation of red, white and blue. Next each symbol underwent exhaustive field analysis. In one test, a photograph was taken of a company service station in an extremely busy highway environment with a background of heavy foliage to boot.

Each of the five symbols, scaled to size, was then placed on successive color photographs of the station as a motorist might see it. Two of the five were immediately superior in visibility and impact. The solution was to combine the best qualities of each. The results of this included a rectangle outlined in blue with a controlled white field. On the field is a three-dimensional triangle, reminiscent of the old delta, in three shades of red. Underneath, in blue, is the new logotype spelling out CITGO.

Further applications followed immediately to project new company image: the three shades of red on the raised triangle were turned into a tricolor band for use on company trucks, service stations and station equipment. Pump islands received special design considerations. They are the most important item in a station, although often overlooked. But this is what the motorist looks for and where he spends most of his time. Beyond this, the basic design concept is currently being carried out in packaging, dealer uniforms, credit cards and sales promotion.

The results will be unveiled on May 17, 1965.

To bring it about, Cities Service Oil Company launched an eye-popping logistics operation. To provide new uniforms, enough material was used to cover 230 football fields or clothe three U. S. Army Divisions. For the new symbol, almost a million square feet of cast acrylic was ordered — enough to put a plastic roof over eleven city blocks. To dress up trucks, signs and service stations in the new company colors, 300,000 gallons of paint were required. At the same time 30,000 high output fluorescent lamps were being installed in company stations along with a hundred thousand pounds of copper lighting ballast—enough to mint a million and a half pennies and solve the country's coin shortage.

In conjunction with its external marketing changes, the Cities Service Oil Company has thoroughly streamlined its marketing organization during the past year. Lines of communication have been tightened and the marketing structure consolidated. Within marketing divisions of the company, the sales force has been reorganized and work responsibilities clearly defined.

For Lippincott & Margulies, long used to major client projects, it was the biggest program ever taken on relative to the amount of time involved—less than eighteen months from start to finish—and one of the most satisfying.

For CITGO, it is the start of a new era.

CITGO
EXTRA RANGE
MOTOR OIL

EASTERN

PICK UP A MAGAZINE, or turn on your TV set, and you'll probably be told to "Fly Eastern and see how much better an airline can be." For with this tantalizing new advertising theme, Eastern Airlines has gone gold mining in the sky—by flinging a provocative challenge at today's air travelers.

And, indeed, Eastern is better! From its friendly, helpful personnel to gleaming new Whisperjets to the smartly-designed ticket offices to a unique "famous restaurants" food service — and most certainly on the corporate balance sheet—a new Eastern is obviously emerging.

"It is an airline," says President Floyd D. Hall, "that under less urgency in time, under less urgency to regain lost markets, less urgency to catch and surpass our competition, might have taken years to build."

"Perhaps, in one sense, the adversities we suffered in recent years have welded us together, tempered the metal of our people, and awakened a sense of dedication that is now our major asset."

Over the years, the nation's news hawks have thoroughly covered Eastern's exciting history. Its steady growth from early air mail routes to eminence as profit-leader of the airline industry is a classic among corporate success stories. Its metamorphosis into an "ugly duckling," after five disastrous years of financial tailspins, is equally well known. And in recent months, the unmistakable and almost unbelievable turnaround at Eastern has again made headlines.

Lippincott & Margulies is extremely proud to be a partner to, and instrument of, the dramatic changes now taking place at Eastern. They represent, we feel, one of the most fascinating epochs in commercial aviation history.

THE "IDEAL" AIRLINE

To the surprise of some, and with the admiration of many, Floyd Hall did not begin his administration by wailing over Eastern's past difficulties. After being named president in December, 1963, he moved quickly and on all fronts. A new top management team was assembled. Improved cost control methods were instituted. New financing and the acquisition of more jet aircraft were speeded up. Safety of operations, schedule reliability, and greater operational efficiency generally received top priority attention.

By February, 1964, Mr. Hall was ready to tackle Eastern's most sensitive problem—an "image" of

poor service and seeming indifference to customer complaints and requirements. Our firm was called in and, during the first meeting, he explained:

"We have been talking a great deal lately about the 'new' Eastern. As you know very well, however, it's not all new. The previous management and board of directors had already initiated certain constructive programs. We have preserved and will continue to build on these programs, enhancing all that has been good with constructive innovations that may be necessary or appropriate."

It was apparent, we pointed out, that while the airline industry had undergone many major changes, Eastern itself had not. A new marketing system, a total marketing effort, was needed, or whatever else Eastern did might be too little and too late.

It was equally true, we continued, that no amount of advertising dollars, no promotional campaign—however extensive or dramatically conceived—could believably convey that Eastern had changed, if change it did not.

There was complete agreement on both points. As our first assignment, Lippincott & Margulies was commissioned to complete a full-scale analysis of Eastern's corporate image — a project that provided the guidelines for many of our subsequent recommendations.

From the research findings, there emerged a clear picture of how air travelers felt about Eastern and what might be called a composite sketch of an "ideal commercial airline." The latter, if not a blueprint for the new Eastern, was at least a challenging target—and a reference point against which Eastern could assess itself and its competitors.

Eastern's imagery was found to be far from faultless, but so too was that of its major competitors. The corporate strengths that were confirmed, moreover, pointed to a more successful future for Eastern than might otherwise have been anticipated.

ATTITUDES OF AIR TRAVELERS

Of the group of nine airlines whose imagery was thoroughly researched, Eastern was the best known. This "familiarity factor," however, cannot be considered a real strength. For it makes evident the fact that those who know Eastern best tend to be not only its best supporters but, often, its severest critics.

In the minds of most people interviewed, Eastern has traditionally been an innovator; its equipment modern and reliable, its passenger services many and varied. In addition, Eastern is recognized as a relatively large airline, with many of the advantages associated with "bigness" — such as extensive research-and-development facilities and highly professional personnel.

On the negative side, many of those interviewed felt that Eastern had fallen far behind in the quality of its passenger services. The handling of baggage was criticized. There was not enough being done during flights to help relieve the apprehension and anxiety that troubles so many air travelers—no matter which airline they have selected. Eastern's pilots and stewardesses, it was said, were efficient but not especially friendly.

Service is easily the prime requisite of the "ideal" airline. Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, it

was also found that those services which are performed in face-to-face situations are considered much more important than indirect services such as a good safety record, or convenient and reliable flight schedules.

As desirable features of the "ideal" airline, women consistently place higher values on courteous, friendly, well-trained personnel than do men, while men give more emphasis to peripheral factors such as ticket price, ground facilities, convenient scheduling, and speed of trip. Both like good food and expect it to be served well, but women are certain to be more outspoken in their demands.

Physical aspects of the plane's interior drew a remarkably high degree of interest whenever the "ideal" airline was discussed. Comfort is the number one requirement of both men and women, and it was also agreed that spaciousness in aircraft interiors constitutes an important aspect of flying comfort. Again and again, in fact, it was indicated that the in-flight experience should be the best part of any plane trip.

Finally, it was determined that no one domestic airline has been established as an overwhelming favorite of air travelers. This, then, became the ultimate objective of the "new" Eastern — and the continuing assignment of Lippincott & Margulies.

"THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY"

With the guidelines established, our immediate objectives became the development of a new showcase for Eastern and, concurrently, a system of corporate identification which would extend through, and influence, all communities serviced by the 19,176-mile network of travel routes.

More specifically, we were charged with designing all that goes into and around that showcase, and with implementing the communications strategy behind Eastern's new corporate identity concept. With, in fact, creating a dramatic and complete change in the airline's physical appearance and marketing communications system.

Mr. Hall himself has told Eastern employees that, "Herein lies the great opportunity for Eastern Airlines. We can steal the show, through a well-planned corporate-wide program aimed at the anxiety factors that trouble air travelers, and calculated to produce a unified expression of Eastern as a company with good manners and quiet good taste; a company that is responsible and reliable.

"The airline that accomplishes these objectives will forge far ahead of its competitors and, indeed, far ahead of the whole airline industry."

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

An effective corporate identification system, it should be understood, is a plan for many years to come. It is not a matter of styling up for the new year; it must be structured against erosion, and vigorously supported by top management. It is self-perpetuating, but not self-sustaining. It encompasses, but does not confine.

Many companies, however, have found that employees tend to erode a corporate identification system simply because they become tired of it. Often this happens, just as the public is becoming consciously aware of it.

Eastern was determined that this should not

happen, and alerted its internal publications, middle management executives, and other key personnel to the need for a sustained educational campaign about the new Eastern program.

A two-way orientation program was launched between representatives of Lippincott & Margulies and their counterparts at Eastern. Coordination of planning and implementation was established early. Special manuals were developed to assure uniformity of design and marketing concept at all levels and locales in the Eastern organization. The liaison that fanned out through both companies is continuing — one of the most effective examples imaginable of a client-consultant relationship.

Though simple in principle, the execution of Eastern's corporate identity system was the severest kind of challenge to creative skills. For it is keyed to a plan that has been thoroughly researched and designed to achieve specified marketing objectives.

At the heart of the system is a unique corporate mark—a stylized, sleek, forward-looking, white Falcon enclosed in a rich blue oval. The new mark, developed after intensive study of all airline symbols since the beginning of commercial aviation, evolved from literally hundreds of candidates and styles under consideration. It is a striking departure from Eastern's previous symbols—a rather plump Falcon with full tail feathers which, over the years, reappeared as a slim, vertical, red bird, and again in a swept-back gold version. And yet, since most air travelers do identify the Falcon with Eastern, and the Falcon itself with zeal and reliability, an important equity has been preserved.

To form a corporate signature that would integrate and distinguish all visual communications, we then designed a new logotype, consisting only of the name EASTERN in strong horizontal lettering. When shown within the graphic format and colors specified, the mark and logotype provide a corporate signature which can be recognized from long distances and a variety of angles.

Thus, whether seen on a plane (soaring aloft or taxiing across runways) or a billboard (being passed at 60 mph) or in airline terminals (with competing signs all around), the Eastern signature projects a corporate personality that is clear, consistent, and totally individual.

Design coordination, of course, is a key feature of the corporate identification system developed for Eastern. The elements of communication, both graphics and nomenclature, which are found on all aircraft, terminals, ticket offices, ground support equipment, as well as in advertising, signage, and all corporate and promotional literature, have been completely redesigned. Even stock certificates and Eastern's attractive new dining menus will reflect the new corporate look.

By mid-1965, exterior designs for the entire Eastern fleet will have been completed. The colors selected are a handsome combination of Ionosphere Blue and Caribbean Blue—continuing in two stripes down the fuselage, then up the vertical fin and rudder to the very top. The complete corporate signature, mark and logo, appears forward over the cabin windows. Numerous test flights were made, with various type planes, before it was determined that the upswept tail design was the

most attractive, had greater potential for public appeal, and provided the best identification.

"To fully achieve our goals," Floyd Hall recently said, "the new corporate identity program will extend to every phase of our business. Everything that our customers see, hear, or come in contact with, must speak to them in that same quiet, competent voice that says Eastern is an airline of substance, an airline that works hard in behalf of its customers, that is considerate of them."

THE MARKETING CONCEPT

To keep things rolling, and to stimulate ideas for new kinds of services, the elements and objectives of the corporate identity program are frequently reviewed by Eastern's management and its consultants. While the basic communications system has been completed, its implementation and application to new and changing marketing conditions are a continuing, open-end project. This is, in fact, a built-in requirement of Eastern's total marketing concept—not a left-over problem.

Generally speaking, our marketing recommendations have been based upon three major research findings: That Eastern possesses an image of acknowledged leadership in innovation; that Eastern is recognized as a major airline; and that Eastern's primary weakness—in the past—was looked upon as being in the area of customer services.

Eastern was urged to build a marketing program around the two major strengths, and to increase its efforts to eliminate the indicated weaknesses in service. At the same time, we stressed the need to overcome those passenger tensions common to all airlines, by emphasizing three special qualities of the new Eastern: substance, competence, and inventive considerateness.

The romance of air travel was also dealt with extensively. Those who delight in flying, it was pointed out, do so not entirely for the adventure and excitement that flying itself represents. They are, in many ways, a special breed of traveler, responsive to special treatment and expecting the best for their money. Consequently, Eastern was urged and now plans to stress:

The Destination Ahead: the places and people that await the air traveler; the fun and sight-seeing that are only a few hours away.

Special promotions—such as Eastern's "Number One to the Sun" campaign—have been launched to lure vacation travelers to popular resort areas in Florida, Bermuda, Mexico and the Caribbean. New sales offices have been opened, both here and abroad, and reservations service is much improved. Advertisements in 22 cities offered refunds for the call if telephone answering time exceeded 20 seconds. And the pleasures of flight begin on the ground, as new Falcon Lounges and handsomely-decorated ticket offices provide comfort, relaxation, and unexpected services.

The Luxury of Flight: flying is one of the "elite" experiences; air travelers expect a pleasant social atmosphere and like to be pampered.

At present, Eastern is introducing a luxurious new dining service—also designed by Lippincott & Margulies, and featuring bone china, crystal, sterling silver, and fine linens. On certain flights, catered menus will be offered from such famous restaurants as Voisin in New York, the Pump Room in Chicago, Jena in Mexico City, Masson's in New Orleans, and the Swiss Chalet in San Juan. Many elements of this service will be provided in regular first class and coach accommodations.

The Relaxed Pleasure of Flying: air travelers are not worn out by a long exhausting trip. They arrive ready for business, or pleasure, or both.

Recent ratings of on-time performance by the CAB show Eastern flights moving, during the past year, from second poorest among all carriers to first place. The number of fast, quiet, spacious Whisperjets now in service has been substantially increased. VIP handling procedures were instituted at principal cities. New paging centers, bilingual ground hostesses, and a greater number of customer service representatives are also being used to minimize the anxieties that often trouble air travelers.

Lower Sound Levels: both in flight, with quiet-flying Whisperjets, and through the design and sound-proofing of ticketing and waiting areas, Eastern is showing its "inventive considerateness."

For many years, noise has been one of the most disturbing, psychological problems in air travel. Eastern is setting a tone of quiet assurance, as well as creating a relaxing atmosphere, through exciting new standards of design for its ticket offices and other ground facilities. Three prototype offices have already been opened in San Juan, Chicago, and Detroit. Now on our drawing boards are the plans for a master showroom on New York's Fifth Avenue, which—in decor, sheer comfort, and variety of travel services—has been designed as the ultimate expression of Eastern's "inventive consideration" for air travelers.

As new offices, aircraft, and travel services continue to mushroom, Eastern is sustaining and bringing to day-by-day reality the great expectations that were kindled by its corporate identity concept. And this is as it should be, for marketing communications are most effective, most believable, when based upon corporate performance. The new Eastern can be identified by this hallmark, too.

There is, to be sure, more than one good reason for saying, "Fly Eastern and see how much better an airline can be."

Lippincott & Margulies, Inc.

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